

Message Text

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42

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /031 W
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R 131025Z OCT 73
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7380
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI
AMCONSUL HONG KONG

S E C R E T BANGKOK 16024

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, PINS, TH, BM
SUBJ: KIDNAPPED RUSSIANS UNDER OPIUM ESCORT

REF: BANGKOK 15844

SUMMARY: CONSULATE CHIANG MAI RECEIVED AN ANONYMOUS LETTER OCTOBER 11 GIVING THE ROUTE OF A LARGE OPIUM CARAVAN WHICH IS SCHEDULED TO ENTER THAILAND FROM BURMA IN EARLY NOVEMBER. THE LETTER INDICATED THAT THE CARAVAN MAY ALSO BRING THE TWO KIDNAPPED RUSSIAN MEDICAL PERSONNEL IN TWO. THE LOI MAW MAY HAVE FINALLY REVEALED AT LEAST ONE OF THEIR MOTIVES IN OFFERING TO RELEASE THE RUSSIANS: UNIMPEDED PASSAGE OF THE OPIUM THROUGH BURMA AND PERHAPS INTO THAILAND. (PARAGRAPHS 1-10 REPEAT K CHIANG MAI 350 AND 352; PARAGRAPH 11 IS EMBASSY BANGKOK'S COMMENT.) END SUMMARY.

1. A MAN IN HIS LATE TWENTIES WHO IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS A SHAN ENTERED THE CONSULATE CHINAG MAI COMPOUND OCTOBER 11 AND GAVE A LETTER ADDRESSED TO "CONSUL GENERAL, AMERICAN CONSULATE, WANG SING KHAM, CHAING MAT" TO ONE OF THE CONSULATE LOCAL EMPLOYEES, THEN LEFT. THE LETTER IS DATED OCTOBER 10 AND PRINTED WITH SECRET

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BLACK BALLPOINT PEN ON FOOLSCAP TYPE PAPER USUALLY USED FOR MIMEOGRAPH IN THE CHIANG AREA. HERewith IS A SLIGHTLY EDITED TEXT OF THE LETTER.

2. "OPIUM CARAVAN AT LEAST 450 MULE LOADS BELONGING TO CHINESE IRREGULARS OF LAO LEE NOW AT PING LENG, EAST OF MONY SANG (LJ 1522) XXX.

3. COMING DOWN ON 15TH OCTOBER 1973 AND REACH THAI BORDER, PRESUMABLY IN THE PHIENG LUANG (MB 6276) MUANG POK (MB 6270) AREAS IN EARLY NOVEMBER 1973.

4. ROUTE FROM MONG SANG (LJ 1522) TO WAN SING (LH 2279) XXX WILL CROSS LOI LEM (LN 234) KUNHING (LO 2279) CAR ROAD BETWEEN KHO LAM (LN 8655) AND KYU SAWK (LN 9865) AND WILL PASS VERY NEAR TON HONG (LO 1214).

5. WILL CROSS THE LONG NAI (LS 5884) TA SANG (LT 4774) CAR ROAD BETWEEN HSA-WA (LS 8860) AND WAN WO LAI (LT 2265) AFTER WHICH, THE CARAVAN WILL REST FEW DAYS AT A CHINESE IRREGULAR FORCE CAMP AT PANG-BI, SOUTHWEST (APPROX) OF AND ABOUT TWO HOURS WALK FROM NA-WAWN (AVMLS 9848) XXX.

6. WILL CROSS SALWEEN TA HO PONG (LC 9206) AND TA HPA LENG (LT 2933) AND WILL PASS THROUGH NAWNG PALAM (MC 2302).

7. WILL ARRIVE AND ENTER THAILAND AROUND AND NEAR PHIEN LUANG (MB 6276) TO THE NORTH OF TUANG POK (MB 6270) IN EARLY NOVEMBER 1973.

8. P.S. ALSO BRING DOWN IMPORTANT SAWBONES. MAPS REFERRED TO: NE 47-2, NE 47-14, NE 47-10, EDITION 1 - AMS - END QUOTE

9. THE BRITISH CONSULATE IN CHIANG MAI ALSO RECEIVED A VERSION OF THE ABOVE LETTER OCTOBER 11.

10. CONSULATE CHIANG MAI COMMENT: THE USE OF THE SECRET

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TERM CHINESE IRREGULARES IN THE LETTER IS UNUSUAL, SINCE THE USUAL PHASE IN NORTH THAILAND IS KMT. THE USE OF THE TERM SAWBONES IS ALSO UNCOMMON.

11. EMBASSY BANGKOK COMMENT: THE LOI MAW MAY HAVE FINALLY REVEALED AT LEAST ONE OF THEIR MOTIVES IN OFFERING TO RELEASE THE RUSSIANS. THE LISTING OF THE OPIUM CARAVAN ROUTE INDICATES A HOPE TO BRING OPIUM AS WELL AS THE TWO RUSSIANS THROUGH THE SHAN STATES AND PERHAPS INTO THAILAND. IN THE PAST, HOWEVER, TRAFFICKING GROUPS NORMALLY OPPOSED TO ONE ANOTHER HAVE BANDED TOGETHER FOR MUTUAL PROTECTION IN TRANSPORTING OPIUM TO THE THAI BORDER. BOTH THE BURMA

ARMY AND BURMA COMMUNIST PARTY HAVE BEEN ACTIVE IN THE ROUTE THE CARAVAN INTENDS TO FOLLOW. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE RUSSIANS WILL BE SPLIT OFF FROM THE CARAVAN ONCE IT REACHES THE BORDER AREA AND NEGOTIATIONS FOR THEIR RELEASE HANDLED SEPARATELY.

12. WE UNDERSTAND THE THE CHINESE IRREGULAR FORCES OF GENERAL LI WE-HUAN HAVE ADDED 150 MULES TO THE ORIGINAL CARAVAN OF 300 MULES. THIS MAKES FOR AN UNUSUALLY LARGE CARAVAN AND THE AMOUNT OF OPIUM IT WILL TRANSPORT COULD AMOUNT TO OVER 20 TONS, BUT THE CARAVAN PROBABLY WILL ALSO CARRY JADE AND OTHER GOODS, AND ITS IMPOSSIBLE TO ESTIMATE THE QUANTITY OF OPIUM INVOLVED. CHU AND LUANG MAY PROVIDED ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON THE MOVEMENT AT THE OCTOBER 25 MEETING MENTIONED IN REFTEL.
UNGER

SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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